

Tale Feathers

August 2005

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Torrey Berger

As I indicated in my first message in this column, I intend to feature the work and opportunities of one of SLAS important committees each month.

As I believe that our emphasis on basic environmental education of the general public, and in particular the young people, is what sets Audubon apart from all other conservation oriented groups, I have chosen our Education Committee as my first featured area.

Did you know that our Education Committee can present programs on a dozen different subjects (or tailor design a program) for both children and adult groups? Such subjects include birds, owls, migration, butterflies, bats, mammals and endangered species.

Did you know that last year our Education Committee made presentations at over 50 venues, reaching over 1900 children and 425 adults?

Did you know that you can join in this important work? You don't have to be an expert or have a special knowledge of the subject matter. With a minimum of "on the job training" with experienced members, you could be helping to inspire future leaders in conservation and environmental efforts.

The Audubon educational approach was succinctly stated by the late Roger Tory Peterson when he said, "If you make someone a birder, you will make them a conservationist." If you would like to assist in this important and rewarding effort, please call Sharon Nickel, V.P. Education at 636-391-8751.

Elsewhere in SLAS we are just finishing the exciting, if not sometimes frantic, planning process for this upcoming year. John Soladar and his field trip committee have prepared an exciting line up for 2005-06 (see the enclosed calendar for specifics). Mitch Leachman is hard at work on setting up a most interesting array of programs and there are several pending issues and programs for action by Linda Tossing and her conservation committee.

Plans are in the works for some special activities at River Lands Environmental Demonstration Area in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers and at Little Creve Coeur Marsh with the St. Louis County Parks Department. Keep an eye on future issues of Tail Feathers for more details on all of this.

I call your special attention to the material printed on the back of the enclosed calendar. It contains a wealth of information about SLAS and the events planned for the upcoming year.

If you have any questions or wish to become more involved in any of SLAS's activities, please feel free to contact me at 314-579-9227 or by email at jberger@lewisrice.com.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities and Announcements

ASM Fall Weekend September 23-25 at Camp Clover Point

The Audubon Society of Missouri, the state's ornithological society since 1901, is having its annual fall meeting September 23 – 25 at Camp Clover Point at Lake of the Ozarks State Park. The weekend features birding field trips led by members of the Missouri Bird Records Committee, a bird ID workshop led by Bill Rowe, and all-around fun fellowship with birders from around the state. For more info, see the ASM website www.mobirds.org or contact ASM President, Sue Gustafson, at 314-968-8128.

Hummingbird Opportunity of a Lifetime!

Join hummingbird bander Lanny Chambers for his live hummingbird banding demonstrations at Onondaga Cave State Park. Lanny will be banding from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. each day at the Visitor Center. Participants will have the rare opportunity to help release banded birds. It's free, and no reservations are necessary. Bring your camera for close-up and macro photos. Dates are August 6 **and** September 10. Onondaga Cave State Park is located off I-44, near Leasburg, Missouri. For more information, visit Lanny's web site at <http://www.hummingbirds.net/>.

A BIG THANK-YOU!!

The St. Louis Audubon Society wishes Good Luck and Thank-you to Anne Bolte, our past *Tale Feathers* newsletter editor. She has accepted an Education position with Fossil Rim Park outside Fort Worth, Texas. Anne leaves behind a new, "green" editor in her place. Starting with this issue, please contact Mary Dueren, Phone: 314-576-1473 (evenings) or mdueren@swbell.net

Field Trips for the New Season

John Solodar

We've incorporated some new ideas into the 2005 - 2006 field trip schedule. We'll also go to some traditional locations. Among the new trips are a visit to Darst Bottom near Augusta and an evening trip to Valley View Glades south of Cedar Hill. Both of these are Conservation Department lands. Darst Bottom is quite new and Mike Arduser is enthusiastic about leading us there. The SLAS Board visited Valley View Glades in the evening a few years ago and had a marvelous time. This trip will be more of a general nature trip with lots of wildflowers, butterflies and moths tossed in, but the birding should be good also. Hopefully the whippoorwills and chuck-wills-widow that were calling the last time will entertain us again.

Joe Eades came up with the idea of doing a Big Sit at the end of Ellis Island at Riverlands. This should be an interesting point from which to watch the comings and goings of migrant waterfowl. We have had Sabine Gulls and a Little Gull here in the past. We'll arrange with the Corps of Engineers so that those who want to can drive out there that day.

Another new trip is a very early morning jaunt to Lost Valley. Dave Rogles was there in late June at 5:45 AM and had an excellent visit. We will try to duplicate his experience with a trip on June 24, 2006 at the same time.

The Prairie Chicken trip to western Missouri is back in the program after a few years absence. If things work out well we hope to go to Dunn Ranch, a Nature Conservancy property in northwest Missouri. The birds are reported to come very close to the blinds that have been set up on the ranch.

Tower Grove Park and Forest Park are not on the specific agenda this year, but we will cover those migrant traps during the ASM annual meeting which is in St. Louis May 6 & 7 next spring. We will host lots of out-state visitors and a lot of field trips are planned.

Birding Trips: August - September

John Solodar

August 27, Saturday. Highway 79 Corridor - The Highway 79 Corridor includes Clarence Cannon NWR, BK Leach and its new units, Prairie Slough and Winfield Dam. When the Buff-breasted Sandpipers come through the sod farms are also included in this area. In August we will search for shorebirds starting at the new Bittern Basin Unit of BK Leach. You don't get there via the original BK Leach entrance, so read the instructions carefully. John Solodar will lead this trip starting at 8:00 AM. Those who want to leave at noon may do so, but some of us will bring lunch and go until mid-afternoon. Note: This trip requires the presence of suitable wet habitat. If conditions are too dry we may have to cancel. Watch MOBirds or call the leader (314-862-5294) after Thursday 6:00 PM.

September 10, Saturday. Tower Grove Park - Join Nick Barber in a search for fall migrants in Tower Grove Park starting at 8:00 AM. Lots of birds should be coming through by this date. We'll meet just east of the Gaddy Bird Garden.

September 24, Saturday - Carlyle Lake Pelagic. Once again, we head to Carlyle Lake for this all day, three-part trip. We will meet at 7:30 AM in the McDonald's parking lot in the town of Carlyle, IL. Land birds and some waterfowl will be in order in the morning. We will be on the lake for Sabine's and other Gulls and possibly some Phalaropes at mid-day. (Reservations are required for the boat trip which will cost approximately \$25.00 per person.) We will finish at parking lot # 3 and search for shorebirds. Sometimes the group has met for dinner at the end. Josh Uffman is the trip leaders. Joe Eades is coordinating reservations for the boat trip. Contact him by e-mail at joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com.

How to get there

Highway 79 Corridor. Starting point is the parking lot for Bittern Basin, a new unit of B.K. Leach. From I-70 take Hwy 79 north through Elsberry. Just north of Elsberry turn right on County Rd P with a sign for Prairie Slough. The road bends to the left after about 1/2 mile and the gravel parking lot is on the left just after the bend.

Tower Grove Park (Gaddy Bird Garden)- I-44 or I-64 (Highway 40) to south Kingshighway. From I-64 go about 1 mile to left on Magnolia. Park on street; walk to the east side of the brushy area (Gaddy Bird Garden) at the north-west corner of the park.

Carlyle Lake - Take I-64 east across the Poplar Street Bridge. Exit I-64 at Hwy 50 East (toward Carlyle). Follow Hwy 54 to Hwy 127 and turn left at the junction. Turn right into McDonalds. Meet in the parking lot.

J. Marshall Magner 1913- 2005

St. Louis Audubon Society (SLAS) lost one of its dearest members with the passing of J. Marshall Magner on May 14, 2005, just ten days after his 92nd birthday. Many of us had the pleasure of seeing Marshall at the SLAS banquet this past April. In addition to having served as President of SLAS, Marshall was instrumental in getting the St. Louis Bird Club (which subsequently became SLAS) established as one of the first local chapters of the National Audubon Society in 1943. Marshall was the recipient of the SLAS Conservationist of the Year Award in 1988 and was the recipient of the Dr. Robert J. Terry Award, our society's highest honor, in 1997. Marshall was also a past president of the Audubon Society of Missouri and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society.

Marshall was a career entomologist, conservationist, naturalist, historic preservationist, master gardener, birder, hiker, public speaker, city councilman, teacher and lifelong volunteer and community activist. He was a Boy Scout leader for over 50 years and recipient of the Silver Bear Award. He was a member of the Missouri Botanical Garden's first Master Gardener Class, the St. Louis Master Gardener of the Year, a Plant Doctor Desk Consultant, Volunteer of the Year and KMOX Radio's "Everyday Hero" 2004. He will always be our hero, and for those of us who had the honor of sharing in his enthusiasm and knowledge of the natural world, he will truly be missed, but will be forever in our hearts.

St. Louis Audubon Recognizes Outstanding Citizens

In our May *Tale Feathers*, our Awards committee announced the awards to be given by our chapter. These are outstanding public officials, citizens, Audubon Members and students. The following is the final list. If you are interested in learning more about our awards and scholarships, please check our Website listed on the back page of the newsletter or contact Lynn Breakstone or Julie Leeman (phone numbers on last page)

St. Louis Audubon Conservation Award:
Ben Knox, Jr. (ret) St. Louis County Parks

Outstanding Natural Resource Legislator:
Rep. William Lacy Clay, U.S. Congress First District

St. Louis Audubon Education Award:
Judy Tisdale (Community School)

Outstanding St. Louis Audubon Volunteer:
Vicki Flier, past VP Education, SLAS

St. Louis Audubon Teacher Scholarship:
Elizabeth Petersen to attend Audubon summer camp in Maine

St. Louis Audubon Scholarship in Graduate Studies:
Marcos Maldonado Coelho (UMSL)

St. Louis Audubon High School Student Scholarship:
Aimee Wegescheide

St. Louis Science Fair Awards:
Primary grades: Kirk Smith (Lindbergh School District)
Secondary Grades: Ryan Turnquist (Rockwood School District)

New Woodland Pool in Kennedy Woods

Sue Gustafson, USFWS Urban Bird Conservation Program Coordinator

One of the projects of the St. Louis Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program, a joint habitat restoration program of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the St. Louis Audubon Society, was completed this last spring in Forest Park's Kennedy Woods. A new wet creek bed and woodland pool is now at the base of the east side of the old stone bridge in the former roadbed of Valley Drive (the road was removed several years ago behind the art museum to provide less fragmentation of the woods).

The bridge crosses over a small creek bed that historically carried water only in times of heavy rain or above average precipitation levels. The creek was most often wet during spring season but would dry out relatively quickly. There was no permanent water source for birds and other wildlife in this section of the woods. Birder Randy Korotev (who has compiled over 25 years of bird surveys in Kennedy Woods) had noted Eastern Phoebes around the bridge for several years in early spring, however, the Phoebes would disappear when the creek bed dried up, and hence there had never been a successful nesting of Phoebes in Kennedy Woods. This spring and early summer, with the completion of the new permanent water source, we now have Phoebes nesting in the woods!

The new water source consists of the creek bed fed by a new bubbler constructed at the western edge of Kennedy Woods (where the prairie/savanna area meets the woods) that traverses a small slope and pools into the woodland pond at the base of the bridge. The water continues over a small spillway at the edge of the new pond and flows under the bridge into another adjoining creek bed. Several new native plant species have been added around the pond, and more native vegetation will continue to be added in the former roadbed area.

This project was made possible due to St. Louis City Forest Park management, Forest Park Forever, and the Kennedy Woods Advisory Group providing funding and in-kind services for habitat restoration as a match for the federal funding provided by the USFWS program. The majority of in-kind services consisted of numerous birders helping out with honeysuckle removal over the last six years. This water source project was the vision of birder Ken Cohen of the Kennedy Woods Advisory Group; Ken also managed the project through its completion. Very, very special thanks to Ken Cohen! The next time you are in Forest Park, talk a walk through the woods and see the addition of the new bubbler, wet creek bed and woodland pool, and see what wildlife it is attracting.

WANTED—A FEW GOOD PEOPLE

The Education Committee is looking for new people to add to our group. We give presentations at schools, garden clubs, senior groups, scouts, etc. We do both daytime, evening and an occasional week-end. The topics are various: birds, butterflies, plants, mammals, bats, owls, trees and a few more. You do not have to be an experienced birder, or have knowledge of the other topics. Our committee provides on the job training with experienced members of the group. You are not required to present any topic until you feel you are ready. Some of our members are retired and some are still employed, so your participation is geared on your availability once you are ready to start presenting. Sometimes we are very busy with one or two presentations a week and other times we only have two or three a month. Our committee meets once a month—usually on a Friday and at a member's home in Glendale. The meeting starts at 9:30am and goes to about 11:00am, when we conclude with lunch together before we disperse about 12:00. It sounds like a lot of work, but it is very rewarding to hear the comments of the children and adults after the completion of the presentation. We also learn something each time we do a presentation as each person does it a little differently and adds a little something of their knowledge.

Anyone wanting to attend one of our meetings should contact me at 636-391-8751.

Sharon Nickl
V.P. of Education

Did you know.....

The Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative

The Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MOBCI) is a partnership of 30 conservation minded organizations, including Audubon Missouri, which include all Audubon Chapters), The Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and the Missouri Department of Conservation. All participating organizations share a common interest in the conservation of bird species, and have signed a Memorandum of Agreement. Representatives from MOBCI participating organizations met in August 2003 at the 1st annual Missouri Bird Conservation Conference in Columbia, Missouri to build working relationships and discuss future directions for MOBCI. The MOBCI Steering Committee was formed as a result of this meeting, and Roger Still, the Executive Director of Audubon Missouri, was selected to chair the committee. MOBCI sub-committees have subsequently been formed at follow-up steering committee meetings to work on the development of the following items:

MOBCI Charter and Bylaws

Ecological Information for All Bird Conservation

Outreach and Education through MOBCI

Research and Monitoring through MOBCI

MOBCI Granting Process

To find out more about MOBCI, contact the Audubon Missouri office.

Audubon Missouri Annual Meeting September 10, 2005

Audubon Missouri, the State Office of the National Audubon Society, will hold its annual meeting September 10, 2005 in Jefferson City. The meeting will focus on methods of distribution of the collaborative fund distribution from National Audubon Society, as well as education, conservation and public policy workshops. The Department of Natural Resources building in Jefferson City was selected for the specific meeting site because the building was designed and built according to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. If you are interested in attending please call Katy Burkett at the state office at 573-447-2249.

DID YOU KNOW....

That you can submit articles to *Tale Feathers*?

That you can submit photos to our webmaster to be posted on our website?

**That you can participate in gathering data for Cornell University as a Citizen Scientist?
(check out Project Feederwatch at birdsource.org)**

That you letters, emails, and call to our state and federal legislatures DO make a difference?

Crane Morning

by Mitch Leachman

First, only darkness
The night still blocks the morning
Yet the sound is unmistakable
The restless rattling of sandhill cranes

Asleep, yet they talk
Never totally quiet on the river
Flutelike or metallic, the variations are many
Higher-pitched are the voices of the children

The sky brightens
Sandbars slowly appear
In motion with the jostling cranes
Islands of birds having passed another night

They are many
Each moment new light
Cast on thousands of families
Stretching upstream as far as one can see

Suddenly quiet
Those nearby seem in wait
Even the waters hush in anticipation
Look! The flocks far upriver have taken flight

The rising has begun!
They climb yet draw closer
Only now do their calls return
Drawn in on the wind, a delayed signal of liftoff

Wave follows wave
Advancing down the river
As the flock reaches each group
Only then do they join on wings and with voices

Crescendo builds
Distinct rattles have become roar
Flapping, calling, climbing, they merge with the sky
Everywhere you see them. Within, you feel them.
A rush! Exhilaration....a fantasy! A dream!

Now, golden sunrise
Awash over the river without crane
Their calls now distant, their shapes all fading
The rising only memory.....but a memory for sure!

Tale Feathers

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St. Louis Audubon Society 2004 - 2005

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As a joint member with National Audubon, you will receive National Audubon's quarterly magazine (Audubon) as well as St. Louis Audubon Society's Newsletter (Tale Feathers). Now you also have the opportunity to join only the St. Louis Audubon Society, receive Tale Feathers, and participate in the educational and conservation activities of St. Louis Audubon. There is no distinction between individual and family membership. Dues cover all members at the same address. For information, call (314) 822-6595.

Use this form to join St. Louis Audubon / National Audubon

For joint membership in St. Louis Audubon Society and National Audubon Society, Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society** and mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O.Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO. 63122

_____ Membership/\$35 For renewal in the National Audubon Society, we recommend that you use the forms supplied by National Audubon. For more information, contact Anne Rankin Horton at 636-256-3402.

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Membership in only the St. Louis Audubon Society: Write checks payable to **SLAS**. Mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

_____ Local Chapter Membership only (St. Louis Audubon Society), Introductory and renewal / \$15

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